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ABSTRACT

An investigation of the characteristics of the 2,969 students who attended Lakeland Community College (LCC) in Fall 1978 but did not return in Winter 1979 revealed that, compared to the average Fall 1978 student, the typical non-returning student was more likely to be a married woman in her early 30's, with little previous college experience and no definite career goals, taking part-time, evening courses in personal/employment programs. A survey, that was sent to approximately half of the non-returning students to determine their current activities, yielded a 25% response rate. Survey responses indicated that: (1) 83.4% of the non-returning students had not enrolled in another educational program after leaving LCC; (2) convenience of scheduling was a major factor in their decision not to return to LCC; (3) change to a five-week winter session was not expected to increase student retention; (4) 63.9% of the respondents rated their college experience as excellent or good; (5) 87.3% had learned of LCC's course offerings through class schedules received in the mail; and (6) instruction, scheduling, and the weather were identified as areas where improvements might affect return-enrollment rates. Survey results are presented in several tables, and a cross tabulation analysis, recommendations, and the questionnaire are included in the study report. (JP)

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ED178111

THE NON RETURNING STUDENT FOLLOW UP

. . .

WHO ARE THEY?

WHERE HAVE THEY GONE?

. . .

A SPECIAL STUDY

conducted by

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

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U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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Lakeland Community College
Institutional Research & Development
April, 1979

INTRODUCTION

This study is essentially divided into two parts. The first portion summarizes the essential characteristics of nonreturning students (those credit students who attended Lakeland Community College in Fall of 1978 and did not return Winter 1979). In addition, their characteristics are compared relative to those of all Fall 1978 Lakeland Students.

The second part consists of an analysis of a mail survey sent to a randomly selected sample of approximately half of the nonreturning students. There was a return rate of 25 percent resulting in a sample of 415 respondents.

PART I - SUMMARY

Who are they?

The typical nonreturning student is likely to be:

-- a married woman

-- in her early 30s

-- with little previous college experience with Lakeland or elsewhere

-- with no definite career or program goals

-- taking courses in the evening on a part-time basis

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF NONRETURNING STUDENTS

Tables I and II suggest that the following tends to characterize the Fall, 1978 nonreturning students:

-- The majority of the nonreturning students were females attending part time.

-- Most were evening students who had completed 15 or less credit hours at the end of Fall Quarter 1978.

-- 33.3% had been continuing students prior to Winter Quarter 1979, while only 9.2% had entered directly from high school in Fall of 1978.

-- 68.3% were from Lake County and 20.6% were from Cuyahoga County.

-- The degree goal of 40.9% of the nonreturners was personal or employment related; 20.0% list an AAS as their goal; 14.5% an AA degree; and 11.9% as AAS degree.

Table I

Selected Characteristics of the Nonreturning Student
From Fall, 1978

N = 2,969

Characteristics	HC	% of Total	Characteristics	HC	% of Total
Male	1,183	39.8%	Degree Goal:		
Female	1,786	60.2	AA	429	14.5%
			AAB	594	20.0
Full-time	334	11.2	AAS & ATS (2)	353	11.9
Part-time	2,635	88.8	Certificate	250	8.4
			Personal	1,215	40.9
Single	1,718	57.9	None	128	4.3
Married	1,251	42.1			
			Credits Completed:		
Day	849	28.6	0-15	2,136	71.9
Evening	1,855	62.5	16-30	287	9.7
Day/Evening	265	8.9	31-45	170	5.7
Entered Fall Qtr. as:			46-60	104	3.5
From High School	272	9.2	61-75	75	2.5
Delay High School	550	18.5	76-90	68	2.3
Transfer	400	13.5	91-Up	129	4.4
Continuing	990	33.3			
Returning	757	25.5			
Residence County:					
Ashtabula	33	1.1			
Cuyahoga	611	20.6			
Geauga	226	7.6			
Lake	2,028	68.3			
Other	33	1.1			
Out of State	38	1.3			

Table II

Selected Characteristics of the Nonreturning Student From Fall, 1978

Mean Age	29.3
Credit Hrs. Fall Qtr.	
Full-time	4,574.0
Part-time	11,453.0
F.T.E.	1,068.5
Average # Cr. Hrs./Student	5.4

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF NONRETURNING STUDENTS RELATIVE TO ALL FALL 1978 CREDIT STUDENTS

Tables II, IV, and V suggest that nonreturning students are different from all Fall 1978 students in the following ways:

-- A larger percentage of them are part-time.

-- A larger percentage of them are females.

-- A larger percentage of them are married.

-- A much larger percentage of them are evening students.

-- A larger percentage of them are new students.

-- The mean age of the group is higher than that for all students.

-- The much greater part-time character of these students is apparent when credit hour figures are examined.

-- The largest program loss was among those students who had declared personal/employment (9999) in Fall of 1978.

-- Most other programs, except personal/employment, seemed to have about the same percentage loss of students between Fall and Winter.

Table III

Student Characteristics Profile

Selected Student Enrollment Characteristics of Fall, 1978, as They Compare With Fall, 1978, Nonreturning Students

	Nonreturning	Total Fall, 1978
Total Headcount -	N = 2,969	N = 6,859
F.T.E	1,068.5	3,435.2

Student Characteristics	Nonreturning		Total Fall, 1978	
	Headcount	% Total HC	Headcount	% Total HC
Full-time	334	11.2	1,837	26.8
Part-time	2,635	88.8	5,022	73.2
Male	1,183	39.8	3,009	43.9
Female	1,786	60.2	3,851	56.1
Married	1,251	42.1	2,577	37.6
Single	1,718	57.9	4,282	62.4
Day Students	849	28.6	2,659	38.8
Evening Students	1,855	62.5	3,296	48.0
Day & Evening	265	8.9	904	13.2
Directly From High School	272	9.2	861	12.6
Delay From High School	550	18.5	875	12.8
Transfer	400	13.5	694	10.1
Continuing	990	33.3	3,157	46.0
Returning	757	25.3	1,272	18.5
Residence County:				
Ashtabula	33	1.1	116	1.7
Cuyahoga	611	20.6	1,418	20.7
Geauga	226	7.6	523	7.6
Lake	2,028	68.3	4,654	67.9
Other	33	1.1	148	2.1
[A]Degree Goals:				
AA Degree	429	14.5	1,186	17.3
AAB Degree	594	20.0	1,528	22.3
AAS Degree	353	11.9	1,273	18.6
Certificates	250	8.4	530	7.7
Personal/Employment	1,215	40.9	2,121	34.1
Undeclared	128	4.3	221	3.2

[A] These degree choices reflect actual student choices independent of program chosen. Undeclared are program choices reconstructed from past records for which actual degree or program choices are not known.

Table IV

Student Characteristics Profile

Selected Student Enrollment Characteristics of Fall 1978
As They Compare with 1978 Fall Nonreturning Students

Characteristics	Nonreturning		Total Fall, 1978	
	Amount	% Total	Amount	Total
Mean Age	29.3	-	26.9	-
Average Number of Credit Hours per Student	5.4	-	7.51	-
Full-time Credit Hours	4,574	28.5	26,408	51.2
Part-time Credit Hours	11,453.0	71.5	25,120	48.8

Table V

Percent Loss of Students
Fall, 1978
By Selected Programs*

Prog. No.	Program Title	N = 6859 Fall, 1978 Enrollment			N = 2969 Nonreturning Students			
		Total Students	Full-Time	Part-Time	Total Students	Full-Time	Part-Time	% Loss
8203	Business Mngt. Cert.	95	-	-	50	3	47	52.6
8207	Real Estate Cert.	78	-	-	66	0	66	84.6
9017	Art	60	22	38	27	7	20	45%
9030	Business Admin.	209	89	120	67	13	54	32.1
9040	Education	80	36	44	27	4	23	33.8
9050	Engineering (4 yr.)	113	49	64	38	13	25	33.6
9199	Undecided Liberal Arts	397	142	255	180	34	146	45.3
9201	Accounting	312	77	235	112	8	104	35.9
9203	Business Mngt.	384	102	282	139	17	122	36.2
9204	Data Processing	237	80	157	77	6	71	32.5
9207	Real Estate	109	8	101	76	1	75	69.7
9209	Secretarial Science	208	81	127	76	11	65	36.5
9299	Undecided Applied Bus.	201	57	144	78	14	64	38.8
9303	Nursing	411	170	241	94	15	79	22.9
9399	Undecided Applied Sci.	73	24	49	23	2	21	31.5
9402	Electronic Engineering	165	52	113	49	7	42	29.7
9405	Mechanical Engineering	125	25	100	48	8	40	38.4
9602	Law Enforcement	107	32	75	39	9	30	36.4
9999	Personal/Employment	2010	228	1782	1185	56	1129	60%

*Programs with largest student enrollments were chosen.

PART II - SUMMARY

Where have they gone?

The convenience of scheduling is a major factor affecting their decision to enroll.

-- Winter weather is an inconvenience, to that extent weather is more of a factor in Winter than in Fall or Spring.

-- Changing to a five-week Winter session as one way of dealing with weather was met with little enthusiasm.

-- There are other inconveniences that appear to bother these students more than weather. They become even more important under poor weather conditions:

    -- scheduling conflict between job and studies

    -- time in which courses are offered

-- When inconveniences at school and weather are added to family illnesses and other household chores, the result is a nonereturning student.

THE SURVEY SAMPLE

Late in January, approximately one-half of the nonreturning students (randomly selected) were mailed a nonreturning survey with the hope of finding out where they went and why they left. (See Appendix.) Four hundred and fifteen of these students (a return rate of 25%) returned the questionnaire. In Table VI a comparison is made of some demographic characteristics of the sample in relationship to the total population of nonreturning students (2969) in order to determine its representativeness. The figures in the table suggest that the sample is sufficiently comparable with the total population to make the attitude survey of value.

Table VI

Relative Survey Sample Characteristics

	Sample N = 415	Nonreturning Student Pop. N = 2969
Sex	32.5% Male 67.2% Female	39.8% Male 60.2% Female
Mean Age	30.1*	29.3
% Enrolled 1 qtr. or less before leaving	46.7%	41.2%
% Part-time	82%	88.8%

*represents an interpolated figure

SURVEY RESULTS

The 415 students in the sample were asked the following questions:

Have you enrolled in another educational program since leaving Lakeland?

346 or 83.4% said NO!

* * * * * * * * *

What were the major reasons for not returning to Lakeland? The following reasons were chosen most often.

Reasons	Times Mentioned
Scheduling conflict between job & studies	241
Found study too time consuming	180
Time courses offered was not convenient	139
Illness, personal or family	138
Fulfilled by goal for personal enrichment	125
Financial reasons	119
Found a job	112

The open-ended responses to this question were coded as follows:

Total responses to #9 Personal "Other" = 91

-- *Of the 91 responses, 54 (59.3%) said that Winter weather was a major factor in their not returning to Lakeland.

-- 5.5% said they simply wanted to skip the Winter Quarter and 7.7% planned to return in the Spring.

-- Some other reasons given by the respondents were as follows:

- o Seven students said course scheduling was a problem.
- o Five lacked transportation to class.
- o Four students were dissatisfied with the instructors.
- o Three stated parking conditions.

* * * * * * * * *

Regardless of your reason for not attending this quarter would you be likely to enroll in the future if Winter quarter were split into two separate five-week sessions (similiar to summer session)?

Yes	75	18.1%
Possibly	115	27.7%
No	96	23.1%
No response	129	31.1%

* * * * * * * * *

How would you rate your overall experiences at Lakeland?

Excellent	28.2%
Good	35.7%
Fair	6.7%
Poor	2.2%
No response	27.2%

* * * * * * * * *

*Weather was not included among the available choices as there is little that can be done about it, except changes in the time frame and structure of the Winter quarter and specific question in regard to time frame and structure are included elsewhere in this survey.

How do you learn of the program and course offerings at Lakeland Community College?

Of those who responded, 87.3% said they learned through class schedule received in mail.

* * * * * * * *

Please write in the space below the one thing which if changed for the better, would have encouraged you to return to Lakeland.

Responses to Question #13 = 251

-- 24 (9.6%) of the 251 respondents answered "the weather."

-- 41 (16.3%) plan to return for Spring Quarter.

-- 26 students (10.4%) stated that they were satisfied with their experiences at Lakeland and felt no changes were necessary.

-- 12 students said they had completed their program.

-- Students most frequently (12.7%) felt improvement was needed in course scheduling.

-- 18 students thought some instructional improvement should be considered.

* * * * * * * *

THE EXPLANATION OF THE CROSSTABULATION OF KEY VARIABLES

Besides tabulating the distribution of responses among the choices to each question in a survey, the responses have also been crosstabulated against one another in order to reveal any relationships. One very strong and statistically significant relationship is between "SCHED" (scheduling conflict between job and studies) and "STATUS" (full-time vs. part-time). This relationship can be found in Table VII (in Appendix). This table clearly shows that scheduling conflict between job and studies is more likely to be a reason for not coming back for part-time nonreturning students rather than full-time ones.

Tables VII, IX, and X describe three other statistically significant relationships which may be somewhat less reliable because of cell size, yet the trends that they describe are worth noting:

(1) Part-time nonreturning students are more likely to have less previous experience at Lakeland than full-time nonreturning students (Table VIII in Appendix).

(2) Those nonreturning students working toward a degree or certificate are more likely to say that they will return in the future than those who are getting training for a job, personal growth, or other reasons (Table IX in Appendix).

(3) Those nonreturning students who give job as a reason for not returning are more likely to have had little previous experience at Lakeland (i.e., enrolled for a short period of time). (Table X in Appendix.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. We recommend an increased stress on student input in the scheduling process, particularly for Winter term where convenience takes on a more significant priority.
2. We recommend that early in Fall 1979, potential nonreturning students be identified and their input into Winter scheduling be sought and utilized.
3. We recommend an increase in the number of telecourse offerings as a more convenient vehicle for providng college courses to students for whom convenience is a major enrollment factor.

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Appendix F-1

LAKELAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

MENTOR, OHIO 44060/ 951-1000

January 22, 1979

Dear Nonreturning Student:

Lakeland Community College is interested in knowing how effectively its programs are meeting the needs of its students.

Of particular value is the information obtained from those students who recently attended Lakeland but who are presently not attending. Since you are a former student, any information, comments, or suggestions that you can supply on the attached, anonymous questionnaire will be most helpful.

Please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed prepaid envelope to Research and Development by February 14, 1979.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Aaron P. Donsky
Director of Research and Development

APD:af/237

NONRETURNING
STUDENT FOLLOW UP

Lakeland Community College is constantly involved in reassessing the value of its program offerings, and your input would be appreciated as a former student who is not now attending. Would you please check the appropriate responses to the following questions and then return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed prepaid envelope.

1. Sex:
   ___ 1. Male
   ___ 2. Female

2. Civil Rights Category:
   ___ 1. White
   ___ 2. Afro-American
   ___ 3. American Indian or Alaskan Native
   ___ 4. Asian or Pacific Islander
   ___ 5. Hispanic
   ___ 6. Nonresident Alien
   ___ 7. Other

3. Age:
   ___ 1. Below 18
   ___ 2. 18-19
   ___ 3. 20-21
   ___ 4. 22-23
   ___ 5. 24-25
   ___ 6. 26-29
   ___ 7. 30-39
   ___ 8. 40-49
   ___ 9. 50-59
   ___ 10. 60-up

4. How long were you enrolled before leaving Lakeland?
   ___ 1. Less than one quarter
   ___ 2. One quarter
   ___ 3. Two quarters
   ___ 4. Three quarters
   ___ 5. Four or more quarters

5. Were you primarily a full-time (12 hours or more) or a part-time (11 hours or less) student while attending Lakeland?
   ___ 1. Full-time
   ___ 2. Part-time

6. What was your original purpose for enrolling at Lakeland?
   ___ 1. To earn a Certificate
   ___ 2. To earn an Associate Degree
   ___ 3. To earn credits applicable towards a Bachelors Degree
   ___ 4. To get training for a job, advancement, or new career
   ___ 5. Personal growth and enjoyment
   ___ 6. Other _____
   _____

7. Have you enrolled in another educational program since leaving Lakeland?
   ___ 1. Yes
   ___ 2. No

   If yes, answer Question 8.
   If no, skip to Question 9.

8. After leaving Lakeland, I enrolled in
   ___ 1. Another community college or technical school
   ___ 2. A branch campus
   ___ 3. A 4-year college
   ___ 4. A university

9. From the following set of items, please number up to three reasons in their order of importance as to why you did not return to Lakeland.

   1 = most important reason
   2 = second most important reason
   3 = least important reason

   Academic
   ___ 1. Transferred to another college or university
   ___ 2. Program not available at Lakeland
   ___ 3. Dissatisfied with caliber of courses
   ___ 4. Dissatisfied with caliber of instruction
   ___ 5. Time courses offered was not convenient
   ___ 6. Unable to maintain academic standing

   Employment
   ___ 7. Found a job
   ___ 8. Scheduling conflict between job and studies

   Personal
   ___ 9. Found study too time consuming
   ___ 10. Illness, personal or family
   ___ 11. Fulfilled my goal for personal enrichment
   ___ 12. Financial reasons
   ___ 13. Relocation
   ___ 14. Change in marital situation
   ___ 15. Lack of motivation to continue

   ___ 16. Other _____

10. Regardless of your reason(s) for not attending this quarter, would you be likely to enroll in the future if winter quarter were split into two separate 5-week sessions (similar to summer session)?

___ 1. yes
___ 2. possibly
___ 3. no

11. How would you rate your overall experiences at Lakeland?

___ 1. Excellent
___ 2. Good
___ 3. Fair
___ 4. Poor

12. How do you learn of the program and course offerings at Lakeland Community College?

	1. Most Often	2. Occasionally	3. Least Often
Class schedule received in mail	___	___	___
Other Students	___	___	___
Relatives or friends	___	___	___
Newspaper Advertising	___	___	___
Radio Advertising	___	___	___
Other (please specify)			
_____	___	___	___

13. Please write in the space below the one thing which if changed for the better, would have encouraged you to return to Lakeland.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

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96 Powell Library Building
University of California
Los Angeles, California 90024

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